

Historical Ties Between Turkey and Europe

“From the white cliffs of Albion to the dun plains of Anatolia, Europe shall stand united and free.”

SIXTEEN TURKIC EMPIRES

1. Turks established sixteen vast empires throughout history. These empires covered vast swathes of land and usually depended upon military conquest, often upon horseback.¹
2. Among these sixteen empires, three practiced shamanism and polytheism. Two empires practiced Tengrism, i.e. primitive monotheism — White Huns and Gokturks. Ancient Turkish alphabet resembles Viking runes (esp. Gokturks).²
3. Two empires practiced Christianity (Avars, The Golden Horde — esp. towards the end). Avars defended Byzantines against Arabs and contributed to the racial composition of Bulgarians.
4. During the Khazar Empire, Turks converted to Judaism *en masse* and established an empire 250 larger than modern Israel. They did so to establish a buffer zone between Christians and Muslims (between Byzantines and the Caliphate). The ruling class was still Tengrist.
5. Uyghurs practiced Buddhism and were the most tolerant, but established a massive empire that encroached upon Chinese territory all the same.
6. During the Talas War, Turks sided with Arabs over the Chinese because the Arabs were outnumbered. However, not all Turks willingly converted to Islam afterwards — at least some Turkish tribes were massacred by Arab marauders.³
7. Karakhanids and Ghaznavids established moderate Islamic empires. They did not always engage in jihad against Christians.
8. Khwarazmians were less tolerant towards Christians but established massive cities in Transoxania and Persia.
9. Hulagu Khan, a practicing Buddhist, committed genocide against the entire Muslim population of Baghdad — the most sophisticated city in the Middle East at that time. He ended the Abbasid line. Christians were spared thanks to his Christian wife, *Dokuz Khatun*. They also aided Hulagu’s army as volunteers and conscripts.
10. The Timurid Empire pursued a policy of extreme violence against tens of millions of Muslims. While he nominally waged “jihad,” some Muslims deserted his ranks because of these genocidal policies. Bayezid II failed to stop his advance despite extensive help from Christian populations.
11. The Mughal Empire also pursued a policy of extreme violence against Hindus but also improved Indian civilization and infrastructure. Mughals built the Taj Mahal.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16_Great_Turkic_Empires

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Turkic_script

³ <https://archive.org/details/JeanPaulRouxPasifiktenAkdenizeTurklerinTarihi>

Babur Shah wanted to merge Islam and Hinduism and inspired the beginning of Sikhism.

CRUSADES

1. During the First Crusade, the Pope exchanged friendly letters with Seljuks to request safe passage into Jerusalem. Seljuks harassed Crusaders while passing through their homeland but did not fight them in an open war.
2. During the Second Crusade, some Turkish troops (mercenaries) abandoned Saladin. Seljuks refused to provide unpaid assistance to either the Crusaders or Saladin's army.
3. During the Third Crusade but also before and after, Byzantines recruited some Turkish converts to Christianity (*Turcopoulos*) to defend Byzantine.
4. Since the Fourth Crusade ended with the loot of Constantinople, the Greek emperor at that time petitioned for help from Seljuks -- who provided some financial and military aid towards the restoration of the Byzantine Empire.
5. Seljuks were liberal Muslims who often lived side by side with Christian Anatolians.

OTTOMAN PERIOD

1. With the exception of Osman I, most Ottoman kings (and later, emperors) were of European descent. This is because they almost always married white women (Eastern European, Western European, Caucasian) who sometimes practiced Christianity in secret.⁴
2. Ottomans established *Enderun*, a special school for talented Christian boys, who converted to Islam — but sometimes practiced Christianity in secret. They exercised a great degree of influence over the Ottoman Empire.
3. *Sokollu Mehmet Pasha*, an Ottoman of Serbian origin, rose to the rank of *grand vizier* during the reigns of three different emperors (Suleiman I, Selim II, Murad III). Some think he practiced Christianity in secret.
4. Ottoman Turks, while persecuting Serbians (early empire) and Armenians (late empire), tolerated Georgians and Hungarians well. Hungarians still consider themselves "Christian Turks"⁵ and have a Magyar minority who speak a dialect of Turkish.
5. Yildirim Bayezid, "Thunder," fought Timur (*Tamerlane*) to protect Anatolia against Mongolian aggression. Even after some Muslim troops abandoned his side, his Christian allies stood by him.
6. After the "Fetret Devri," i.e. *Interregnum*, the Ottoman Empire rebuilt its glory by relying on their political capital in eastern Europe.

⁴ <https://archive.org/details/PadisahAnalariAliKemalMeram>

⁵ <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-6th-summit-of-the-cooperation-council-of-turkic-speaking-states>

7. Since the Fourth Crusade alienated Byzantines from Latin Catholics, some Greeks preferred Turkish rule to Latin rule. This is best captured by the aphorism, "we would rather live under the Turkish turban than the papal mitre."⁶
8. *Hunyadi Yanosh*, a Hungarian engineer, helped Mehmed II build giant cannons that bombarded the walls of Constantinople. Mehmed II reestablished the Orthodox Patriarchate under his patronage.
9. Albanians, while rebelling against central Ottoman authority during the time of Skender Begh, usually had positive ties with the Ottoman Empire. Albanian Christians received many benefits that were not afforded to other Christians (Bulgarians, Serbs, et cetera).
10. Bosnians, who practiced the Bogomil faith at that time, converted to Islam willingly to receive protections and to end harassment at the hands of Christians.
11. Suleiman III, who ushered in the golden age of the empire, exchanged letters with the Pope. He was promised the keys of St. Peter in exchange for his conversion to Christianity. However, this did not happen.
11. During the "Tulip Craze," there was a mutual cultural fascination between Dutch liberals and Ottoman liberals. The Dutch monarchy minted coins with crescents on it, some time before and during the Tulip Craze.⁷
12. Martin Luther King wrote some vitriolic passages about Jews and Catholics but was oddly tolerant of Turks. This inspired a complex interplay of sympathy between Turks and Protestants in general.
13. The Ottoman Empire (during the reign of Mehmed IV) granted *capitulations* to Louis IV, in order to boost friendly ties. This involved mining and trading rights.
14. Emperor *Selim II* was very protective towards Christians and was killed for allegedly attempting to establish Christianity as the state religion.
15. Christian minorities were exempt from military service (at the cost of paying poll tax, *jizyah*) and were sometimes wealthy merchants.
16. During the *Tanzimat* (Reformation) era, multiple emperors sought to provide greater protections for Christian minorities and placed them under the jurisdiction of Western powers.
17. There was an Ottoman pasha who, either in jest or in seriousness, proposed the merger of Christianity and Islam (a crescent with a cross instead of a star).

WORLD WAR I

1. During World War I, Ottoman Turks allied with Western Christians (Germans, Austria-Hungarians, Bulgarians) against the Allied Powers (Britain, Arabs, France, Russia, Italy). In other words, this was not a religious war.
2. Germans wanted Turks to invoke Caliphal privileges to unite all Muslims against Allied Powers, but Arabs revolted against Turks despite their common Islamic faith.

⁶ <https://warhistory.org/article/better-the-turkish-turban-than-the-papal-tiara>

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liever_Turks_dan_Paaps

3. Liman von Sanders, a German general, successfully defended the Dardanelles against British troops (together with the Turkish general, Cevat Cobanli). Germans provided cannons, mines, bullets to the Turkish army.
4. Ataturk received financial help from the Soviet Union but refused to establish a communist dictatorship. He was almost assassinated by three communist spies for this. He established the Izmir Fair to open the Turkish economy to Western-style capitalism.
5. Italians, due to complex World War I politics, abandoned the invasion of Anatolia and left behind crates of weapons to aid the Turkish War of Independence.
6. The French were somewhere in between Italians and the British in terms of their attitude. They provided weapons to Armenian separatist rebels but they withdrew early and left behind crates of weapons to aid Turkish troops.

REPUBLICAN PERIOD

1. Ataturk abolished both the monarchy and the Caliphate, i.e the Islamic version of the Vatican. He transformed Hagia Sophia (Istanbul) and Sumela Monastery (Trabzon) into museums to maintain them as neutral spaces.
2. Ataturk was admired by Winston Churchill, Vladimir Lenin, and Adolf Hitler — despite these three world leaders belonging to very different ideological camps.
3. Ataturk was critical of the “Armenian *mezalim* [persecution]” in his *Nutuk* (Oratory) and purged CPU members (Committee of Progress and Union, responsible for the Armenian mass-deportations and killings) from the party.
4. Ataturk was both inspired (earlier period) and repulsed (later period) by CPU. However, due to a “limited talent problem,” some CPU members were eventually admitted back into CHP (Kemalists).
5. Ataturk was highly critical of Islam during his younger days. However, he made concessions to conservative Muslims in his later life. He called Islam “the unifying glue” of the nation in the later chapters of *Nutuk*, while continuing his anti-clerical stance.
6. Turkish *laïcité* was inspired by French secularism and, to a lesser degree, Dutch liberalism. Islamists later sought to replace it with “American-style secularism” that would be more permissive of religious activism in the public sphere.
7. Ataturk was permissive of the idea of granting greater civil rights to Kurds. However, he later suppressed an Islamist revolution by Sheikh Said (whose ideology was a mixture of Islamism and Kurdish separatism).
8. Ataturk purged Ottoman Turkish from Persian and Arabic vocabulary. Persian was the court language and was popular in poetry, while Arabic was naturally popular among the clergy. Modern Turkish has many words imported from European languages: French (25%), Italian (5-10%). Turks do not usually borrow English loanwords.
9. Ataturk established many reforms for Turkish women, including the right to vote and the right to be elected into the parliament. He abolished the headscarf.
10. Turkey had a female prime minister, Tansu Ciller — and many female party chairwomen and party members.

11. Despite popular Western perception, not all coups were Kemalist in origin. Kenan Evren, for example, relaxed the headscarf ban and established Islamic schools (Imam Hatip schools) to “oppose the influence of communism.”

12. CHP (Kemalists) prevented Turkish troops from invading Iraq, in part due to friendly ties with the European Union. Islamists, under the Erdogan government, wanted to invade Iraq.⁸

CHP & POLITICAL PRESENTATION OF MINORITIES

1. The vice president of CHP, the Kemalist party, is a Christian woman (of Turkish and Arab origin).

2. Kemal Kilicdaroglu, former CHP chairman, was an Alevi (heterodox Muslims who sometimes sympathize with Christianity). He stacked CHP's inner council with Alevis and purged Muslims, but this was considered extreme by some and he lost many elections.

3. Ekrem Imamoglu, the most popular presidential candidate to defeat Islamists, is of Muslim Greek origin (Pontic).

4. Kurds who live in Eastern provinces vote for the Marxist party, DEM. Kurds who live in Western provinces vote for CHP *en masse* during presidential elections.

5. CHP opposes an independent Kurdistan in Turkey but tolerates Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq. CHP opposed military incursions into Syria and Iraq, while Islamists endorsed it (even though this constitutes violence against Muslim civilians).

6. DEM Party attracts votes from small minorities like Yazidis, Assyrians, Chaldeans – as well as Syrian immigrants. More religious Syrians vote for AKP (Islamists).

7. Alevis vote for CHP *en masse*, despite the suppression of a theocratic rebellion in Dersim during the early days of the Kemalist revolution. CHP endorses the restoration of their indigenous name, *Dersim* – but opposes doing so for other Kurdish cities.

8. European expats (Britons, Germans, French, Ukrainians, Russians) who live in Turkey vote for CHP *en masse*. Their total population is around 1.4 million. However, the number of European expats who own homes and who routinely visit Turkey amount to 2.5 million (according to some estimates).

9. Turkey attracts anywhere between 2 - 8 million tourists every year, 60-75% of whom are Europeans. They boost the Turkish economy and bring much-valued foreign currency to the Turkish market.

10. Turkish Christians (excluding ethnic minorities like Armenians and Greeks) amount to 0.5 million members in total (average, total estimate unknown). Christian missionaries who do not engage in espionage are tolerated well.

11. Minorities in Kurdish provinces (Chaldeans, Assyrians, Yazidis) vote for DEM (Marxism, Kurdish nationalism).

12. Secular Turks sometimes sympathize with non-Islamic religions (shamanism, Alevism, Christianity).

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_March_Memorandum

13. Sabbateans, crypto-Jews who have converted to Islam after Sabbatai Zvi's failed messianic claims, often sympathize with CHP. Some were influential in CHP in the past, like Canan Aritman.

RACIAL COMPOSITION & ANCESTRY

1. Blue eyes occur in 5% of Turks, while green eyes occur in 1% of Turks.
2. Blond hair occurs in 10% of all Turks, keeping in mind that blond hair often fades in adults. Red hair occurs in 0.5% of all Turks. Brown hair occurs in 40% of all Turks, while black hair occurs in 50% of the population.
3. 25% of Anatolians are descended from Ionian Greeks. 20% of Anatolians are of Kurdish ancestry, while 20% of Turks are of Asiatic origin. 5% of the population are Circassians (Caucasians, i.e. People of the Caucasus). 30% are native Anatolians. Turkey endorses civic nationalism, best captured in Ataturk's motto: "Happy is he who calls himself a Turk."
4. The Laz minority in northeastern Anatolia are descended from Georgians.
5. Polish immigrants in Istanbul established Polonezkoy, "Polish village," in Istanbul.
6. German classical and postclassical anthropologists classified Turks, Hungarians, Finns as Ural-Altaic (based on racial composition and linguistic ties). All three languages are agglutinative.

NORMATIVE TIES WITH THE WEST

1. Turkey is a member of: the Council of Europe, NATO, Customs Union. It has the second largest Army and the third largest Navy in NATO.
2. Turkey is a candidate member of the European Union but the negotiations are frozen, not suspended, due to the recommendation of Ursula von der Leyen (and other high-ranking European leaders).
3. The European Union did not ask Turkey to recognize the Armenian Genocide and usually agrees with the Annan Plan, i.e. some kind of reconciliation between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.
4. Britain, most Eastern European states (esp. Hungary), and the USA endorsed Turkey's accession to the European Union at that time. France and the Netherlands conditioned the accession to nation-wide referendums.
5. Turkey hosts the Incirlik base, the largest American base in Greater Middle East. There are nukes stationed there.
6. CHP has appointed three vice presidents to *Socialist International*.

TIES WITH THE HARD RIGHT

1. Adolf Hitler, at the request of Atatürk in their private correspondence, spared Turkish Jews (Crimean Karaites, who reject the Talmud) from the Holocaust.
2. PEGIDA, a German coalition against hard-line Islam, had a Turkish spokesperson at one point.
3. Geert Wilders expressed admiration for Atatürk⁹ and once commented about the beauty of Middle Eastern civilizations, while expressing criticism for Islam.
5. Viktor Orban, former hard-right prime minister of Hungary, calls himself a “Christian Turk.” Hungary hosts the *Kurultaj*, a Pan-Turkic council.
6. While CHP is centre-left, some Kemalists in the West sympathize with right-wing parties because Islamists and Marxists in the West have formed an uneasy alliance.
7. CHP opposes Arab immigration into Turkey and, by extension, into Europe.¹⁰

⁹ <https://www.medyaradar.net/hollandali-siyasetci-geert-wildersten-ataturk-paylasimi-haberi-2153955>

¹⁰ <https://www.turkiyetoday.com/turkiye/main-opposition-chp-leader-ozel-calls-for-comprehensive-plan-for-syrian-refugee-return-90156/>

